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Summary record of the 56th meeting
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Chairman: Ms. Wensley ..... (Australia)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Mselle

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 151: Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations (*continued*)

(a) Financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations *(continued)* (A/54/782; A/C.5/54/47)

Death and disability benefits (continued)

1. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the report of the Advisory Committee on death and disability benefits (A/54/782) said that the note by the Secretary-General (A/C.5/54/47) constituted the tenth quarterly report submitted in accordance with paragraphs 16 and 17 of General Assembly resolution 51/239 A. Of the original 564 death and disability claims awaiting processing as at 19 May 1997, 7 cases had been pending as at 20 February 2000. The Secretariat had indicated that the tenth quarterly progress report would be the last report submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 51/239 A.

2. While there was no need to continue to report on the backlog of cases as at 19 May 1997, the Advisory Committee recommended that annual reports should be submitted on the status of all death and disability claims. Its comments and recommendations on refining the information to be included in future reports were contained in paragraphs 5 and 6 of its report. In paragraph 6, the Advisory Committee stated its view that some assessment could also be given regarding which incidents were likely to lead to claims. In implementation of that recommendation the Secretariat would use historical data to indicate the ratio of claims to incidents reported in order to determine the approximate number of claims likely to be submitted, obviating the need for it to predict for each incident whether a claim would or would not be submitted.

3. **Mr. Park Hae-yun** (Republic of Korea) agreed that there was no need to continue issuing reports on the backlog of claims but that annual reports on the status of all death and disability claims would be very useful.

4. **Mr. Medina** (Morocco) said that he would be interested in receiving an update on the status of any claims filed since 31 December 1999.

5. **Mr. Wharton** (United States of America) requested clarification of the significance of the dates of 19 May and 30 June 1997 in tables B and C of the annex to the note by the Secretary-General.

6. **Mr. Tang Guangting** (China) said that his delegation agreed with the recommendations of the Advisory Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

7. **Mr. Persaud** (Field Administration and Logistics Division) said that the Secretariat noted the recommendation of ACABQ regarding annual reports. In reply to the representative of Morocco, as at 24 March 2000 there had been 163 claims awaiting processing; a number had been received since the beginning of the year. The Division intended to clear that backlog by 30 June. The date of 30 June 1997 was the date up to which incidents were recorded in the peacekeeping database.

8. **The Chairman** proposed that the Committee should recommend to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft decision:

"*The General Assembly*,

"*Takes note* of the note by the Secretary-General on death and disability benefits, as contained in document A/C.5/54/47, and of the progress made in clearing the backlog of claims for incidents,

"*Takes note also* of the related report of the Advisory Committee for Administrative and Budgetary Questions contained in document A/54/782, and

"*Concurs* with the observations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and decides that annual reports be submitted on the status of all death and disability claims, commencing with the period ending 31 December 2000."

9. *The draft decision was adopted.*

Agenda item 121: Programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 (*continued*) (A/C.5/54/52)

Estimates pertaining to matters of which the Security Council is seized

10. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Advisory Committee had

considered the report of the Secretary-General in connection with two political missions pertaining to matters of which the Security Council was seized (A/C.5/54/52), which had been submitted in the context of actions taken by the Security Council regarding good offices, preventive diplomacy and conflict peace-building missions on the basis of requests from Governments and/or recommendations of the Secretary-General.

11. By its resolution 1233 (1999) the Security Council had expressed its support for the decision of the Secretary-General to establish the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS). Its initial mandate had been from 15 April to 31 December 1999.

12. As indicated in paragraph 3 of the report of the Secretary-General, the requirements of UNOGBIS for the period from 15 April to 31 December 1999 had been met from the commitment authority granted to the Secretary-General by the General Assembly in paragraph 1 (a) of its resolution 52/223 on unforeseen and extraordinary expenses for the biennium 1998-1999, which had been approved in the context of the final budget appropriations for that biennium.

13. By its letter of 14 December 1999 (S/1999/1253), the Security Council had taken note of the proposal of the Secretary-General to extend the mandate of UNOGBIS for three months until 31 March 2000. The Advisory Committee had noted that requirements for that period ($557,200) were being met from the commitment authority granted to the Secretary-General by the General Assembly in paragraph 1 (a) of its resolution 54/252 on unforeseen and extraordinary expenses for the biennium 2000-2001.

14. By its letter dated 10 March 1999 (S/2000/202), the Security Council had taken note of the proposal of the Secretary-General to extend the mandate of UNOGBIS for one year from 1 April 2000 to 31 March 2001. The Advisory Committee had noted from paragraph 7 of the report of the Secretary-General that the estimated requirements for that period would amount to $2,723,300. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee had been provided with the organizational charts of the two missions indicating their staffing requirements by function. The Advisory Committee had also noted from paragraph 4 of annex I B to the report that a P-4 post for an information officer had been requested for UNOGBIS.

15. With regard to transport operations, ACABQ had noted from paragraph 7 of annex I B to the report of the Secretary-General that UNOGBIS had seven vehicles with high mileage received from MONUA, and that provision had been made for the acquisition of six new vehicles. In the light of the fact that the current fleet of seven vehicles had high mileage, the cost-effectiveness of keeping them in service should be examined. As for the proposal to purchase six new vehicles, the Advisory Committee had requested that the possibility of obtaining some of those vehicles from MINURCA should be explored.

16. By its letter of 10 December 1999 (S/1999/1236), the Security Council had taken note with appreciation of the proposal of the Secretary-General to establish the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in the Central African Republic (BONUCA), initially for one year. The Advisory Committee had noted from paragraph 10 of the report of the Secretary-General that the estimated requirements for BONUCA for the period from 15 February 2000 to 14 February 2001 amounted to $3,431,300.

17. In paragraph 17 of annex II to the report of the Secretary-General, provision had been made ($156,000) for the training programme for BONUCA. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee had been informed that the amount for the training programme under the regular budget was in addition to voluntary contributions. It had also been informed that in the case of UNOGBIS that function would be carried out exclusively using extrabudgetary resources.

18. The Advisory Committee recommended approval of the charge of the total requirements of $6,154,600 against the provision of $90,387,200 for special political missions under section 3 (Political affairs) of the programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001. The total charge thus far against that provision amounted to $61,517,700, leaving a balance of $28,869,500.

19. **Mr. Hassan** (Nigeria), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that he supported the proposals of the Secretary-General regarding the two special political missions and the recommendations of ACABQ.

20. **Mr. Repasch** (United States of America) said that his delegation supported the conclusions and recommendations of ACABQ, in particular its views on the cost-effectiveness of the vehicle acquisition plan.

His delegation hoped the Secretariat would heed that advice and make economies where possible.

21. **Ms. Buergo Rodríguez** (Cuba) said that her delegation agreed with the proposal to recommend to the General Assembly approval of the total requirements for both Offices, and that those requirements should be charged against the provision for special political missions. she reaffirmed the role of the General Assembly in decisions to fund mandates arising directly from Security Council decisions from the regular budget.

22. **Mr. Ramos** (Portugal), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the European Union associated itself with the statements made by Nigeria and the United States of America in concurring with the proposals in the report of the Secretary-General and the Advisory Committee's conclusions and recommendations.

23. **Mr. Odaga-Jalomayo** (Uganda) said that obtaining new vehicles for UNOGBIS would be more cost-effective in the long run. His delegation was concerned that extrabudgetary resources only were to be used for staff training for the missions

24. **Mr. Sach** (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) agreed on the need for the most cost-effective means of ensuring that adequate and reliable transportation was available for UNOGBIS. He would pursue the matter with the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

25. Adequate resources were available for the training of the personnel of both Offices. Specifically, an amount of $390,000 was currently available from extrabudgetary contributions for the training of the government officials and related non-governmental organizations participating in UNOGBIS.

26. **The Chairman** proposed that the Committee should recommend to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft decision:

"*The General Assembly,*

"1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/54/52) and the related report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the estimates in respect of matters of which the Security Council is seized,

"2. *Approves* the charge of total requirements of US$ 6,154,600 for the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS) and the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in the Central African Republic (BONUCA) against the provision for special political missions under section 3 (Political affairs) of the programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001,

"3. *Notes* that, following this decision, the utilization of the provision for special political missions amounts to $61,517,700 and that an unallocated balance of $28,869,500 remains against the provision of $90,387,200 for special political missions."

27. The oral report presented by the Chairman of the Advisory Committee would be issued as an official document and its symbol included in the first paragraph of the proposed draft decision. She took it that the Committee wished to recommend the draft decision to the General Assembly.

28. *It was so decided.*

Agenda item 118: Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations *(continued)*

Agenda item 164: Human resources management (*continued*)

Gratis personnel provided by Governments and other entities (continued) (A/C.5/54/51)

29. **Mr. Beissel** (Director, Operational Services Division), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on gratis personnel provided by Governments and other entities (A/C.5/54/51) said that the report covered the period from 1 October 1999 to 31 December 1999 and had been submitted in response to General Assembly resolution 51/243. During the period covered by the report there had been a reduction from 98 to 18 type II gratis personnel. He would be happy to provide any additional information that members might require.

30. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), orally introducing the Advisory Committee's report on gratis personnel provided by

Governments and other entities, said that the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/C.5/54/51 had been submitted in response to the General Assembly's request in paragraph 6 of its resolution 51/243 that the Secretary-General should report on a quarterly basis on the acceptance of the gratis personnel referred to in paragraph 4 of the resolution, with a view to ensuring compliance with its provisions.

31. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee had been informed that the posts of water and sanitation expert and head of electricity and power supply service listed in table 3 of the Secretary-General's report had already been budgeted for and included in the staffing table of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET). However, since the posts, which were considered to be of critical importance, had not yet been established in the early stages of the mission, experts from Australia had been provided.

32. The Advisory Committee had been informed that all gratis personnel attached to the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), namely, 11 Cuban and five Swiss nationals, had either already left the Mission or would do so by 30 April 2000, since none of them had been authorized to stay beyond a six-month period. With regard to the replacement of the 11 Cuban medical officers, the Advisory Committee had been informed that there was provision in the budget of UNMIK under public health administration to bring on board advisers and experts in that field. It had been further informed that UNTAET had 20 medical United Nations Volunteers, who provided support for United Nations civilian staff. There was no equivalent United Nations Volunteer presence, however, in UNMIK. In that connection the Advisory Committee wished to recall paragraph 38 of its report contained in document A/54/622, in which it recommended that a study be made of the potential for wider use of United Nations Volunteers to meet the requirements of field missions, to be submitted to the Assembly by the main part of its fifty-fifth session. The Advisory Committee proposed to return to the matter in the context of its consideration of the study. In conclusion, the Advisory Committee recommended that the General Assembly should take note of the report of the Secretary-General on gratis personnel provided by Governments and other entities.

33. **Mr. Hassan** (Nigeria), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Organization's use of gratis personnel must be in accordance with the relevant provisions.

34. **The Chairman** proposed that the Committee should further consider and make appropriate recommendations on the report of the Secretary-General in the context of its ongoing informal consultations on the question.

35. *It was so decided.*

The meeting rose at 10.55 a.m.